

CPYRGHT

Our Stake, Losses and Outlook

CAPITAL STRATEGY SESSIONS

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WASHINGTON.

President Johnson, Defense Secretary Robert McNamara and ranking military, diplomatic and intelligence advisers met twice yesterday in the first of a series of critical Vietnamese strategy sessions. The talks are expected to result in a widening American commitment in the Viet Nam war.

Even as the second of yesterday's secret meetings was under way, the White House announced that Mr. Johnson, Mr. McNamara and the Joint Chiefs of Staff will convene again today for a third meeting on Viet Nam.

Mr. McNamara and Gen. Earle Wheeler, chairman of the Joint Chiefs, returned here yesterday from a five-day survey trip to South Viet Nam.

Press Secretary Bill Moyers said late yesterday afternoon the President and his advisers had not yet discussed additional American troop deployment to Viet Nam nor any callup of reserve units, both of which are expected here.

The President and his aids, Mr. Moyers said, concentrated yesterday on intelligence operations in Viet Nam, the role of the United States Information Agency there and American economic assistance to South Viet Nam "as related to pacification and reconstruction."

Besides the President, Mr. McNamara and Gen. Wheeler, others at yesterday's White House Vietnamese meetings included Secretary of State Dean Rusk and Under Secretary of State George Ball; Central Intelligence Agency Director William F. Raborn and his deputy, Richard Helms; outgoing USIA Director Carl Rowan and his successor, Leonard Marks; Deputy Defense Secretary Cyrus Vance, and McGeorge Bundy, Special Presidential Assistant for National Security Affairs.

Asked if the President might soon disclose publicly any policy decisions made at the Vietnamese strategy sessions, Mr. Moyers replied:

"I have no idea when a statement by the President might be advisable or necessary."

The expectation here, however, is that Mr. Johnson will make such a statement within the next few days, and that it will signal an increased American troop involvement in the Viet Nam war, higher defense spending and probably a summons to active duty for some reserve units.

That expectation was heightened yesterday when Mr. McNamara said the Communists now have 165,000 full or part-time guerrillas pitted against approximately 500,000 South Vietnamese government troops and this

ratio is totally unacceptable. Last year, the ratio was 5 to 1. Military experts estimate it takes 10 regulars to each guerrilla for victory in a guerrilla war.

The implication was that more American troops will be sent to South Viet Nam to redress the balance.

Additionally, both the South Vietnamese government and the American military command in Saigon asked Mr. McNamara for more U. S. troops when he was in Saigon, and the assumption here is that those requests will be approved.

Mr. Moyers said yesterday's White House sessions featured a "penetrating review of the many facets of the situation in Viet Nam."

The meetings, he went on, were the first of a series the President will hold in the next few days "to review Secretary McNamara's report and to discuss in great detail all the problems we face in South Viet Nam."

Mr. McNamara, who returned here at 5:30 a. m. yesterday from Saigon, telephoned the President by 8 a. m. and was asked to send to the White House immediately a preliminary written report of his survey trip to South Viet Nam.

After reading the Defense Secretary's report, the President summoned his ranking aids to an 11:30 a. m. White House meeting, which lasted until 1 p. m. The second meeting began at 2:30 p. m.

Mr. McNamara declined on arriving here yesterday to outline any recommendations he would make to President Johnson about future American actions in Viet Nam, but asserted:

"I can say our recommendations will be based upon the commitment of this nation to preserve the freedom of the people of South Viet Nam."

There are grave doubts here that the South Vietnamese by themselves are now able to preserve that freedom.

Mr. McNamara insisted, however, that "the situation there is not all black," pointing out that the South Vietnamese forces are continuing to fight and that the Communists are sustaining sizable combat losses.

He acknowledged, however, that guerrilla strength has mounted "dramatically" in the last year and said units of at least one regular army division from Red North Viet Nam now are operating in South Viet Nam.

Meanwhile, Republican-Democratic Congressional differences about the Administration's Viet Nam policy flared up again.

Senate majority leader Mike Mansfield of Montana called for a reconvening of the 1954 Geneva conference which ended the French-Vietnamese war, saying the U. S. will undergo an "ordeal of indefinite duration and increasing sacrifice" if the current war is not settled through negotiations.

Soon after House minority leader Gerald Ford of Michigan said in a National Press Club speech to the Captive Nations Assembly that President Johnson should seek more than just a negotiated settlement in Viet Nam.

"We cannot fight in Viet Nam to negotiate a settlement that will simply open the rest of Southeast Asia to aggression and subversion," Rep. Ford declared.